



**BAREFOOT, PLEASE** This resort encourages you to ditch your shoes

# A place to eat, pray and love

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## **Veranda Pointe aux Biches Hotel**

Pointe aux Biches, Mauritius



We arrive at night, packed among the mostly white, mostly blonde, mostly travelling-with-children South African holidaymakers, businesspeople and new villa owners on the two flights in to Mauritius every day. We are transported to our hotel, a seaside resort.

I will confess that I am not the world's biggest fan of resorts. I prefer my holidays more urban. But **Veranda Pointe aux Biches Hotel** will make me question this.

"We are the only hotel here that encourages you to go barefoot," we are told by the awesome and ever-present locals who staff the hotel. (Spare a thought for the worker who follows your guided tour the next day, sweeping clean the footprints you make in the beach sand areas of Sandy Lane, the hotel's exclusive dream wedding facility that can sleep several families.)

Our supper - a beautiful fresh salad and tasty Mauritian vegetable curry - is waiting for us in the dining area that's basically on the beach.

At the adjoining Foot Loose bar, a trio of Mauritian musicians in bright Hawaiian shirts sing popular American songs to ageing, applauding European tourists with their toes in the sand. Fifty percent of the tourists in Mauritius are from Europe, 30% from Africa (dominated by 145 000 South Africans a year) and 20% from Asia.

This is the postcard of the carefree life of those who've made their money. Days on the beach, nights in the bar. It's all very Eat, Pray, Love, without the ashram. At the entrance - alongside the flowing water where you wash your feet for love and prosperity - the bookshelf of holiday reads left behind is peppered with steamy romance fiction with titles like *The Viking's Sensation*.

Arriving in darkness is always strange because you cannot see if your paradise is paradisaal. After a night in our large, comfortable room in one of the many chalets dotting the grounds, we find it is indeed beautiful here, even despite the wind making the sea a bit grotty.

The dining hall is impressive with an array of international breakfast goodies at a seemingly endless buffet.

It's the spa and the firm no-nonsense massage in a hut on the edge of the sand that finally melts my resistance. I become a German aunty, I reach for my copy of *The Viking Sensation*, I want a cocktail and then I just want to lie here all damn day.

Only 17km from Port Louis, Veranda Pointe aux Biches is a relatively affordable option that offers escapism with quick access to the city for business or sightseeing. I'd come back.

- Blignaut was a guest of the Veranda group. To learn more, visit [veranda-resorts.com](http://veranda-resorts.com) and [heritageresorts.mu](http://heritageresorts.mu). Check for specials on their website. Rates for a room for two currently range from about R3 000 to R3 700 per night



**BLUE FOR DAYS** The central pool area at the hotel leads to the bar and the beach and the good life

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED